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FIRST LADY, GOVERNOR HONOR STEM TEACHERS WITH GIANTS AWARD

(BOISE) – First Lady Lori Otter today recognized the exceptional efforts of three Idaho Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) teachers by presenting them with the 2012 GIANTS Award at a ceremony held in the Governor's Ceremonial Office.

Timberline High School (Boise) teacher Dick Jordan; Jason George of Vision Charter School (Caldwell); and Lakeland School District's (Rathdrum) Elementary Gifted and Talented teacher Elizabeth Brubaker were awarded \$2,000 each as recipients of the Governor's Industry Award for Notable Teaching in STEM (GIANTS).

"Dick, Jason, and Elizabeth serve as a model of how educators can work with industry to enhance science and technology education," Governor Otter said. "Teachers have a tremendous responsibility to prepare today's students for tomorrow's workforce. More than ever, we need teachers who can inspire students to lives spent in discovery, learning and achievement. Those teachers who excel deserve our support and recognition."

The GIANTS program was initiated by the Office of the Governor and is sponsored by the Science and Technology Roundtable, a group of industry leaders including the Micron Foundation, Idaho National Laboratory, URS, Hewlett-Packard, LCF Enterprises, and Idaho Power Company. With support from the State Department of Education and Office of the State Board of Education, as well as the Discovery Center of Idaho, GIANTS recognizes teachers for their efforts to link industry and the economic future of Idaho to the classroom through the enhancement of science and technology education.

Honorable Mention awards of \$500 each were presented to three additional teachers: Paul Shaber of Fruitland High School, Mike Stansel of Rocky Mountain Middle School (Idaho Falls), and Tauna Johnson from Genesee Elementary School.

All the participating teachers were nominated by the student council and/or parent groups at their school for making science exciting, challenging and relevant. A cash prize of \$500 goes to each school/student council that nominated the GIANTS award recipients, with a cash prize of \$100 going to each school/student council that nominated the Honorable Mention award recipients.

The GIANTS partners are firmly committed to the advancement of science and technology education and consider it vital to Idaho's economic future. The Governor, First Lady and industry partners congratulate this year's winners and honorable mentions for their significant contributions to education.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Attached is a brief summary for each of the award recipients.

Elementary School GIANTS Awardee:

The 2012 elementary school winner is Elizabeth Brubaker who teaches Lakeland School District's Elementary Gifted and Talented classes. Elizabeth has a bachelor's degree from Bowling Green State University and a master's degree from the University of Connecticut and was recognized as IBM and Classroom Magazine's Computer Teacher of the Year for Idaho in 1990.

Elizabeth is passionate about encouraging kids to be inventive and creative and was instrumental in the creation of the Invent Idaho program as well as the co-author of the book *Inventing for Kids*.

Elizabeth engages her students in FIRST Lego League, Mars Rover competition and other hands-on learning through science and research experiments. She also engages with area companies and subject matter experts to bring industry into the classroom.

Middle School GIANTS Awardee:

The GIANTS Middle School Teacher is Jason George of Vision Charter School in Caldwell. As a teacher and mentor, Jason has developed the entire school's science curriculum. He also developed an innovation science mentoring program for school's elementary teachers and has given numerous staff developments, teaching both methods and best practices for effective science instruction, K-12.

He leads groups of students through a variety of science competitions and challenges including Future Cities, Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge, and the QuikScience Challenge through the Wrigley Institute of Environmental Studies at the University of Southern California, winning honors in each. Jason also coordinates a school-wide science night each year as a culminating activity for students to show their mastery of the scientific method. By using guest speakers and connecting his students with the community, they are able to see real-world application.

Jason has a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology Education as well as a minor in biology from Northwest Nazarene University; he is also working towards his master's degree in science education at Montana State University.

High School GIANTS Awardee:

The GIANTS High School Awardee is Dick Jordan. He serves in many roles at Timberline High School in Boise, teaching biology, environmental science, modified biology, physical science, AP biology, and AP environmental science. He was recently honored as the Idaho Science Teacher Association's Teacher of the year and was a state finalist in the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Math and Science.

Dick is the advisor/founder of TREE (Teens Reconnecting to Earth Experiences), Timberline's outdoor/ecology club, as well as the DaVinci Club, Timberline's Math/Science/Mythbuster/Chess club. Within the classroom setting, he designs programs and projects with DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality) and the National Park Service to help students get outdoors while learning and caring for the environment. Some examples include launching LifeOutdoors.org and OutsideDay.org involving the community, high school students, and elementary school students.

He holds bachelor's degree in Biology and a minor in Spanish from Idaho State University, master's coursework in wildlife and fisheries science at Texas A&M, and a master's of education degree in Education, with a focus on integrating technology in the classroom, from Walden University.